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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Second meeting of the Conference of  
Ministers of African Least Developed Countries

Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya  
26-27 April 1982

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE  
OF EXPERTS OF AFRICAN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES  
TRIPOLI, LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA, 17-18 APRIL 1982**

**A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

1. The meeting of the Inter-governmental Committee of Experts of African Least Developed Countries was held in Tripoli on 17 and 18 April 1982. The meeting was opened at 9 a.m. on 17 April 1982 by Mr. Salem Mohamed Oweish, Director General, People's Committee for Foreign Liaisons Bureau of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Member of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Libya.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following States members of the Commission: Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Mali, Rwanda and Uganda.

3. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the African Centre for Training and Research in Development Administration (CAFRAD) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

4. The Conference elected Mr. Chaikou Yaya Diallo, Director, United Nations Division, Ministry of International Co-operation, Guinea, as Chairman and Mr. Lerotholi Mabotse, Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Planning, Lesotho, as Rapporteur.

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5. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
4. Review of current trends and prospects in the African least developed countries
5. Evaluation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries (SNPA) - Implications of SNPA for growth and development in the African least developed countries
6. Review of the country presentations of the African least developed countries in the light of the Lagos Plan of Action
7. Arrangements for implementation, review and monitoring of the Substantial New Programme of Action for 1980s for the Least Developed Countries (SNPA):
  - (i) Implementation of SNPA at the country level, including preparations for and expected results of country review meetings
  - (ii) Arrangements at the regional and global levels for implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of SNPA.
8. ECA programme of work for the African least developed countries - 1982-1983;
9. Any other business
10. Adoption of the report of the meeting together with recommendations and draft proposals for consideration by the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries
11. Closure of the meeting.

B. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

6. Mr. Salem Mohamed Omeish, Director-General of the People's Committee for Foreign Liaisons Bureau of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and member of the Board of Directors, Central Bank of Libya, opened the meeting by welcoming the representatives on behalf of his country to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. He said that he did not want to dwell on the substantive issues that the Committee had to deal with since the documents that were prepared for the meeting were rich both in analysis and in facts and figures related to the problems of the African least developed countries. There was no doubt that there was an urgent need to improve socio-economic conditions in

the African region in general and in the least developed countries in particular. People should not merely live but live well. The present meeting of the Committee had been preceded by the first meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries held at Addis Ababa in the previous year and the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in September 1981, which had adopted the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries. While that programme was a positive step forward in the search for solutions to the problems of the least developed countries, the need for such countries to reaffirm their responsibility for shouldering their own burdens was still crucial. There could be no political independence without economic stability. Collective self-reliance was still a major goal and African countries must be ready to pay the price of co-operation at regional and subregional levels, since co-operation was a necessary prerequisite of progress. Co-operation was also necessary at the international level if prosperity at large was to be realized. The call for the establishment of a New International Economic Order was a reaffirmation that the present order had been working against the interest of developing countries. Africa, for instance, was the major producer of some of the world's most essential commodities, yet it had very little say in current international relationships. There was a need, therefore, for the existing unjust international order to be completely overhauled so that the fruits of progress could be enjoyed by all mankind.

7. In his statement to the meeting, the Executive Secretary, Mr. Adebayo Adedeji, thanked Mr. Salem Mohamed Omeish for his inspiring address. Through him he also thanked the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the excellent facilities it had placed at the disposal of the meeting. The Committee of Experts had been established to prepare for the annual meetings of the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries. That Conference had been instituted as a subsidiary organ of the Commission by resolution 397(XV), adopted at Addis Ababa on 12 April 1980. The Committee was expected at its present meeting to deal with the various matters that would be submitted for the consideration of the Conference at its second session, which was scheduled to be held at Tripoli on 26 and 27 April 1982.

8. The first substantive task of the Committee was to review economic performance in the African least developed countries during the period 1980-1981 and recommend desirable courses of action to be pursued in the immediate term. He noted that economic performance in that group of countries remained dismal and prospects for the immediate future extremely bleak. In the immediate term it appeared that the overriding policy priority in most of the African least developed countries must be to restore both domestic and international balances; in that regard, the support of the international community, particularly in respect of the urgent provision of adequate external resources, assumed a central and crucial role.

9. The second session of the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries was taking place after the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which had been held in Paris from 1 to 14 September 1981 and which had adopted the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries (SNPA). Another important task of the meeting

was therefore to take stock of the Paris Conference, evaluate SNPA and consider arrangements for its implementation, follow-up and monitoring. The text that had been finally adopted by the Paris Conference as the Substantial New Programme of Action was the result of a compromise between the aspirations of the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, and what the aid partners were ready to offer. As such, SNPA fell short of the expectations of the least developed countries in a number of areas. At the same time, however, it represented a significant step forward, since it opened up significant possibilities to all least developed countries; for that reason its implementation should be pursued with vigour and monitored as closely as possible.

10. The Programme adequately encompassed the problems, priorities and objectives of the least developed countries. It recognized that action at the national level by the least developed countries themselves would have to be supplemented by international support measures.

11. He believed that the amount of external aid that would be available to the least developed countries under SNPA might be much less than the amount that they had expected on the basis of which the African least developed countries had planned for a 6 per cent growth rate in their GDP during the 1980s. According to projections made by the secretariat, if basic needs were to be satisfied and mass poverty alleviated in the coming years with a level of aid inflows much less than expected, a much greater measure of self-reliance than previously realized would have to be mobilized and more inward-looking policies adopted. The benefits that each least developed country would derive from the provisions of the Programme depended largely on the extent to which it was successfully implemented. That made agreement on arrangements for implementation, follow-up and monitoring at the country, regional and global levels, embodied in the Programme itself, particularly important. Accordingly, he invited the Committee to exchange views and agree on recommendations and guidelines for the implementation of SNPA at the country level, including in particular the preparations for and expected results of the aid consultative groups which, according to the Programme, each least developed country should convene no later than 1983.

12. He drew the attention of the Committee to the conclusions and recommendations of the ECA/UNDP/UNCTAD consultations on follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which he had convened and which he believed were pertinent to the deliberations of the Committee.

13. He informed the meeting that the secretariat had been provided with additional staff resources to discharge its responsibilities in respect of the least developed countries more effectively. However, there were still severe difficulties in meeting the travel and related costs of substantive assistance and he called upon the Committee to consider ways and means of overcoming those difficulties.

14. In concluding his statement, the Executive Secretary thanked UNDP for its financial assistance in, and the UNCTAD secretariat for its contribution to the organization of the meeting.

Agenda item 4: Review of current trends and prospects in the African least developed countries

15. In introducing the discussion, a representative of the secretariat said that it was clear from document E/ECA/LDCs.2/2, entitled "Overview of developments in the African least developed countries, 1980-1981", that during 1980-1981 the main features of the economic situation of African least developed countries had been the continuation of a very low rate of growth and a worsening of the external balance situation. In 1980 and 1981, the GDP growth rate of African least developed countries had ranged between 3.2 and 3.4 per cent annually, which was barely higher than the rate of population growth. A number of countries had experienced a negative rate of growth. Agriculture had performed fairly well because of generally good weather conditions in Africa, although the 1979-1980 season had been bad in the Sahel and drought conditions had recently been reported in southern Africa. However, the performance of agriculture was offset by the decline in industrial production as well as by the difficulties encountered in mining. Those problems had originated mainly from external factors, which had led to shortages of energy and other inputs. Because of the rise in the cost of energy, the cost of imports had increased while lower world demand had depressed exports. To counter the rise in the external deficit, which had led to serious budgetary problems, many Governments had initiated stabilization programmes which included measures to control imports. Those measures explained the fall of imports in real terms which in turn had had a heavy cost in terms of growth, despite the assistance which had been made available under those programmes by monetary institutions, such as IMF.

16. For 1982, ECA had made projections indicating a GDP growth rate of 3.4 per cent for the African least developed countries, but latest information showed that that was probably optimistic in the case of some countries. It was clear, therefore, that the recommendations of the Paris Conference concerning the assistance required by least developed countries had to be implemented as a matter of urgency. However, it was also imperative for the African least developed countries themselves to take measures to stimulate economic growth and for other African countries to increase their co-operation with their less fortunate neighbours.

17. During the discussion that followed, some representatives reported on the various measures that their Governments were taking to restore balance to their economies, particularly in the monetary field.

18. One representative remarked that it was evident that non-economic criteria still governed the allocation of aid to the least developed countries. This explained, to a large extent, the very skewed nature of the level-of-aid profile in the least developed countries. There was a need to urge donor countries to minimize political considerations as much as possible in the disbursement of aid to the least developed countries. It was pointed out that many of the least developed countries were incurring an extremely heavy debt-service burden at a time when the cancellation of those countries' debts had been advocated in many international forums.

19. The same representative said that general policy prescriptions might not be applicable to individual countries. It would be useful for the ECA secretariat to undertake in-depth studies of the specific problems of individual countries with a view to making country-specific policy recommendations. The study of the monetary and fiscal problems in individual least developed countries would, for instance, be particularly useful in redressing their domestic and international disequilibria.

20. The point was made that, while credit restriction was a useful instrument for bringing about monetary balance, it was important to be selective in the application of such restrictions. Production sectors in the least developed countries should, in particular, be provided with all the necessary incentives.

Agenda item 5: Evaluation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries (SNPA) - Implications of SNPA for growth and development in the African least developed countries

21. A representative of the secretariat presented document E/ECA/LDCs.2/3, "Implications of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries for growth and development in the African least developed countries". The document evaluated SNPA in the light of the objectives and needs of the African least developed countries as contained in their country presentations; they had been prepared and jointly reviewed with aid partners prior to the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which had adopted the Programme. In presenting the document, the representative of the secretariat said that the text of SNPA, as finally adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, was the result of a compromise between the aspirations of the developing countries,

and particularly the least developed among them, and what the developed countries were willing to offer. The programme fell short of the expectations of the least developed countries in several areas, particularly since most of its provisions were **neither** concrete nor specific. However, the Programme represented a significant step forward, especially since it provided an opportunity for the international community to focus attention on the problems and needs of the least developed countries throughout the decade of the 1980s.

22. He dwelt at length on the provisions of the Programme with respect to external aid flows, and pointed out that, because those provisions were couched in very general terms, it was extremely difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy the volume of aid that would be available to the least developed countries under the Programme. However, on the basis of estimates made by the secretariat, it was believed that the increase in aid as a result of the Programme would not be more than 60 per cent of the amount that the least developed countries had expected and on the basis of which they had originally planned for an average yearly rate of growth of GDP of 6 per cent, which corresponded to a near doubling of GDP at market prices by 1990. According to the assessment made in the document, if the least developed countries were to satisfy basic needs and alleviate mass poverty they would have to adopt more inward-looking policies, and measures aimed at greater self-reliance and at maintaining progress, with a suitable mix of simple and advanced technologies, the fostering of closer intra-African market links, the promotion of investment in labour-intensive activities and the curbing of consumption. The path now open to the least developed countries was painful and involved considerable sacrifice.

23. Finally, the representative of the secretariat emphasized that, because of the lack of specificity in the provisions of the Programme, it would be important for its implementation to be closely monitored if the least developed countries were to derive maximum benefits from it. The arrangements for the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Programme, embodied in the Programme itself, should thus be regarded as providing an unique opportunity whereby the global undertakings contained in it could be related to the specific requirements and priorities of individual least developed countries.

24. In the discussion that followed, the quality of the analysis contained in the document was generally commended. It was, however, pointed out that, while the use of highly aggregated data was inevitable, such data could be misleading and could mask important differences between countries. It was important for future analyses of that nature to be carried out on a country-by-country basis so that the situation obtaining in individual countries could be readily apparent; that would further facilitate inter-country comparisons.

25. It was observed that, since SNPA was a compromise text, it was important that the issues on which a compromise had had to be reached between the positions of the developing countries and those of the developed countries during the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, should be presented at the various relevant international forums. Responding to this observation, the ECA secretariat emphasized that it was the member States' responsibility to bring those issues up continuously at such forums. It was further pointed out by the secretariat that ECA was ready to give any assistance that might be needed in that respect.

26. One representative referring to the document that had been presented, said that it made no reference to man-made disasters. He suggested, therefore, that reference should be made to such disasters in addition to natural catastrophes.

27. It was urged that SNPA should be seen in the light of the current international economic crisis. It was obvious that the assistance that the least developed countries expected might not be forthcoming in the quality and quantity envisaged. Donor countries had become increasingly inward-looking. There was therefore a need to assess what that meant in terms of policy in the developing countries. It was important and urgent that the African countries, particularly the least developed among them, which were those most seriously affected by the adverse international environment, should harness their potential for collective self-reliance and self-sustainment within the framework of the recommendations of the Monrovia Strategy, the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos.

Agenda item 6: Review of the country presentations of African least developed countries in the light of the Lagos Plan of Action

28. A representative of the secretariat introduced document E/ECA/LDCs.2/4, entitled "Critical analysis of the country presentations of African least developed countries in the light of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos". He first noted that the ECA secretariat would have liked to base the study on an evaluation of the development plans of most African countries. However, as a first stage, the study had concentrated on the African least developed countries because of the availability of the country presentations of those countries. He added that the study had also been submitted to, and considered by the second session of the Joint Conference of Planners, Statisticians and Demographers.

29. The study was composed of two parts, namely: (i) an analysis of objectives and strategies in the country presentations as well as policies for the development and management of domestic resources and modalities of bilateral and subregional co-operation; and (ii) a review of policies in selected key areas of agriculture, industry, and transport and communications. He then pointed out that most of the African least developed countries had emphasized the essential goals of the Lagos Plan of Action, namely national and collective self-reliance and self-sustainment. In that connexion, he referred to the efforts described in most country programmes with regard to the mobilization of domestic resources, the improvement of fiscal and monetary systems, and export diversification. He noted, however, that the nature of, and means for the transformation of country economies were not very clearly spelt out in many of the programmes of the African least developed countries.

30. The representative of the secretariat emphasized the fact that self-reliant and self-sustaining development depended on human, natural and financial resources, and on a sound physical and institutional infrastructure. In that regard, he indicated that the programmes of the least developed countries, had emphasized the aspects of health, training, literacy and employment in the development of human resources.

With regard to natural resources, only a few countries had outlined clear investment strategies for the exploitation of their resources, and no mention had been made in the programmes of subregional co-operation in the exploitation of natural resources, such as minerals. In the energy sector, the programmes of the least developed countries had appropriately recommended the utilization of alternative and renewable sources of energy, although inadequate emphasis had been given to bilateral and multinational co-operation in that field. On financial resources, the representative noted that the African least developed countries, in their programmes, had aimed at achieving high savings rates.

31. At the sectoral level, the representative noted that all the programmes of the African least developed countries had accorded the highest priority to the agricultural sector, with particular emphasis on food self-sufficiency. The major problems to which the programmes proposed pertinent solutions included desertification, soil degradation, floods, low investment in agriculture, and the weakness of agricultural institutions. However, adequate emphasis had not been placed on policies either to reduce post-harvest losses or to establish food security systems at the national and subregional levels. The representative also said that, in the industry sector, the national programmes aimed at creating industries based on the countries' natural resources appropriately linked to the key sectors, such as agriculture. He indicated that the dominant trend in the national programmes was towards agro-industries and small- and medium-scale industries utilizing mainly local inputs, with high labour intensity and low energy consumption.

32. In conclusion, the representative of the secretariat referred to the high priority that the programmes of the African countries had assigned to transport and communications. He referred specifically to the development of feeder roads, the establishment of intra-African links within the framework of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, and the improvement in structures for the maintenance of communication channels.

33. Representatives thanked the secretariat for the clear presentation of the issue and noted that such a study was very useful in evaluating the extent to which African countries were incorporating the guidelines of the Lagos Plan of Action in their development programmes and plans. More specifically, it was recommended that the study should be continued and applied to the development plans of African countries.

34. One representative, however, asked for information on the precise conclusions of the study. Another noted that the development of human resources, especially as regards training, was not given sufficient attention in the study and that further studies should take that aspect into account and cover it adequately.

35. The representative of the secretariat indicated that the study was not aimed at drawing common conclusions valid for all African least developed countries, but was mainly an attempt to highlight some points of convergence between country presentations and the Lagos Plan of Action and to outline areas which needed to be emphasized in country programmes in the light of that Plan of Action. He then briefly outlined some major conclusions of the study in respect of broad policies and strategies, natural and human resource management, and the agricultural, industrial, and transport and communications sectors.

Agenda Item 7: Arrangements for implementation, review and monitoring of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries

(i) Implementation of SNPA at the country level, including preparations for and expected results of country review meetings

36. The secretariat provided the Committee with a report on the activities that it had undertaken in respect of the follow-up and monitoring of SNPA; that report was contained in the annotated provisional agenda (document E/ECA/LDCs.2/Exp/1(a)7. In December 1981, the secretariat had sent a cable to all the Governments of the African least developed countries requesting them to provide information on: (i) the steps being taken to establish aid consultative arrangements for implementation and review of SNPA; (ii) the date and place of review meetings scheduled for the period 1982-1983; (iii) the type of documents to be submitted to the review meetings; (iv) the assistance required from ECA in the establishment of aid consultative arrangements, the organization and substantive servicing of review meetings and the preparation of reports of the meetings; (v) the assistance envisaged from organizations and bilateral agencies; (vi) the action taken with regard to the Immediate Action Component of SNPA and prospects for immediate assistance; and (vii) the latest data in respect of the Immediate Action Component.

37. On 27 January 1982, the Executive Secretary of ECA had convened the ECA/UNDP/UNCTAD consultations on the follow-up of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The purpose of the consultations was to exchange information on activities at the national, regional and global levels concerning the implementation of SNPA; to discuss the roles of ECA, UNDP and UNCTAD in the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of SNPA; and to determine the modalities for future co-ordination of efforts and exchange of information.

38. The report outlined the conclusions and recommendations of the consultations, since it was felt that they were pertinent to the discussions of the Committee.

39. The representative of UNDP presented a document entitled "Note on the preparations of donor round tables for the least developed countries" (LDCs/2/UNDP/1), which explained the approaches followed in UNDP round tables, as well as the methods used in their preparation and the organization of their proceedings.

40. He reported that, following consultations with donors, it had been agreed that the United Nations Special Measures Fund for the Least Developed Countries was to be used mostly for projects in least developed countries; \$US 10 million could be used for that purpose and \$US 3.1 million for assistance in the organization of country review meetings. He indicated that that amounted to an average of \$US 100,000 per country for mainly substantive preparatory work and logistical requirements, and that it would therefore not be possible to cover the financing of sectoral missions. He suggested, therefore, that such missions be financed under each country's Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs).

41. Referring to the consultations between ECA, UNCTAD and UNDP, which had taken place in Addis Ababa in January 1982 and which were reported in the annotated provisional agenda [document E/ECA/LDCs.2/EXP/1(a)], he noted that there had been a useful dialogue on the identification of tasks in the implementation of SNPA. However, UNDP had not yet commented on the draft minutes of that meeting, and had certain reservations to make concerning the report, as presented in the annotated agenda. Those reservations related particularly to the question of the assessment of socio-economic conditions and the role ascribed to UNDP. He indicated that a least-developed country had a number of options in carrying out such an exercise. A government might wish to undertake the assessment itself with minimum outside help, to use ECA expertise, to avail itself of planning projects executed by DTCD and financed by UNDP, or to use the services of other organizations, such as the World Bank. Each least developed country concerned was free to choose one or more of the options open to it. He further noted that studies made by organizations could serve as inputs to a government presentation or to a report to a donor round table. The document presented gave the impression that UNDP had mainly a secretarial role, but UNDP was also in a position to provide technical support, especially in the assessment of various inputs and the finalization of country presentations.

42. The representative of UNCTAD presented a document entitled "Note on country review meetings for the implementation of the SNPA" (LDCs.2/UNCTAD/1). He recalled that country review meetings were envisaged by SNPA as an important part of the implementation process at the national level. He referred to the objectives, the agenda, the timing and the periodicity of meetings, and drew attention to certain points concerning the selected lead agency, venue, organization and participation. Regarding the documentation to be prepared by each country, he stated that there was no guidelines available at present to assist individual least developed countries.

43. However, he outlined some specific issues which least developed countries might wish to examine, including the reconciliation of the country's realistic requirements with the need to achieve minimum standards, the desirability of presenting a macro-economic framework, the optimum format for project profiles, and the modality of presenting multicountry or subregional co-operation projects and schemes.

44. He also referred to paragraph 117 of SNPA, which emphasized that continuing interaction between specific implementation activity, focused at the country and regional level, and the global monitoring activity was crucial for SNPA's success. He emphasized that UNCTAD was prepared to assist least developed countries, upon request, in their preparation for country review meetings, which would at the same time be useful to UNCTAD in undertaking the global monitoring task.

45. Representatives provided information on their focal points for continuing contact with development partners, and on their inter-ministerial co-ordination arrangements as regards external assistance. All delegations stated that they intended to hold a review meeting; and most indicated the proposed date for such a meeting. They also provided information on the technical assistance that they had requested for their country preparations, but noted that those preparations were the responsibility of the Government of each least developed country.

46. The meeting welcomed the consultations that had taken place between ECA, UNDP and UNCTAD. It was stressed that it was important that ECA and UNCTAD should be associated with UNDP in assisting the least developed countries in the substantive preparations for country review meetings; the three organizations should closely co-ordinate their activities with respect to those preparations.

47. With respect to the financial assistance indicated by UNDP, one participant remarked that the amount earmarked for each country might be insufficient for some countries.

48. Several representatives agreed that the issues raised by the UNCTAD representative were important. However, one delegation was of the opinion that discussion of those issues required more time and preparation than was possible at the present meeting. Another participant felt that, for countries which were already well advanced in the preparations for their review meetings, it was already too late to discuss such issues, but their discussion could be very useful for those countries which had not yet started such preparations.

49. The representative of UNIDO provided information on the solidarity meetings which had been organized or were planned in a number of least developed countries. He indicated that the information collected in the preparation of those meetings, as well as the in-depth industrial reviews and project profiles prepared by UNIDO in several least developed countries, in accordance with the New Delhi Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Third General Conference of UNIDO, could be made available to ECA, UNDP and UNCTAD as a contribution to the country reviews and the overall monitoring and follow-up exercise on SNPA.

(ii) Arrangements at the regional and global levels for implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of SNPA

50. The representative of UNCTAD presented a "Note on information needs for global monitoring of the Substantial New Programme of Action" (LDCs.2/UNCTAD/2) which UNCTAD had made available to the meeting. He pointed out that SNPA contained a number of objectives sufficiently well defined to permit fairly accurate monitoring. In some cases the objectives needed to be more clearly defined to be susceptible to such monitoring, and UNCTAD would be taking them up with the specialized agencies directly concerned. Many of the objectives were quantitative in character, and of those a large proportion could be monitored by using statistics already available from international sources.

51. With respect to qualitative objectives, UNCTAD hoped in the first instance to draw on documents already available from the least developed country itself, e.g. development plans, government budgets and financial reports, and ministerial statements, or from other sources, e.g., major studies by international organizations, including the regional commissions, and documents produced by each least developed country's trade and development partners.

52. He stressed that the work done by ECA with respect to regional monitoring would be great value to UNCTAD in its task of global monitoring. He then informed the meeting that the UNCTAD secretariat would be issuing a note verbale to States and international organizations requesting information on the implementation of SNPA.

53. UNCTAD was required to present a report to the thirty-seventh Session of the General Assembly on the implementation of SNPA. It would be mainly methodological, but would also reflect information received in reply to the note verbale. In any event, it was expected that the substantive global monitoring process would be in place by 1983 and fully operational in good time for the mid-term review scheduled for 1985.

54. The meeting took note of the presentation. One participant felt that the material presented was such that no discussion was necessary but that the Governments of all least developed countries should provide UNCTAD with the necessary documentation.

55. A representative of the ECA secretariat said that the Commission had a specific mandate under paragraph 125 of SNPA to contribute to the follow-up process and to offer an opportunity for the least developed countries to exchange experience and seek solutions to common problems at the national, regional and global levels. The terms of reference of the annual Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries embodied that mandate. Through the Conference, the secretariat would undertake yearly reviews and perspective studies and produce relevant statistics on the economic and social trends in African least developed countries, including a review of progress in, and of policy issues affecting, the implementation of SNPA. The deliberations of the annual Conference of Ministers would be fed into the global monitoring process. It was pointed out that ECA was continuing its assistance to countries in the preparation of documents to be presented at the individual country review meetings. The secretariat had received a number of requests for such assistance.

56. A number of representatives and observers stressed the importance of avoiding duplication in data gathering, and urged close co-ordination between UNCTAD, ECA and other United Nations agencies, so as to make the maximum possible use of resources as well as of data available on the various economic sectors in the specialized agencies. They also urged that the activities of the various United Nations organizations, bodies and agencies, as well as of inter-governmental organizations, in respect of the follow-up and monitoring of SNPA should be closely co-ordinated and harmonized.

Agenda item 8: ECA programme of work for the African least developed countries - 1982-1983

57. A representative of the secretariat presented document E/ECA/LDCs.2/5, "ECA programme of work for the least developed countries 1982-1983, A note." He said that, pursuant to paragraph 7 of Conference of Ministers resolution 397 (XV), in which the Executive Secretary was called upon to establish an adequately staffed section within the Commission secretariat to be responsible for the substantial and continuous technical work, substantive support and advisory services needed in connexion with the least developed countries, within the framework of the Substantial New Programme of Action, the secretariat had been provided with additional staff resources within the United Nations regular budget. Accordingly, arrangements were being made to establish a section on the least developed countries within the Socio-Economic Research and Planning Division. He outlined the main thrust of the programme of work and invited the meeting to comment on it.

58. One representative raised questions relating to the need for the establishment of the section, its present status, competence and terms of reference.

59. The representative of the secretariat said that the section was being established since work on the least developed countries had previously been carried out on an ad hoc basis, which meant that an appreciable part of the resources of the Socio-Economic Research and Planning Division had had to be diverted from other sub-programmes at considerable cost to them. Three posts for economists had been allocated to the Division to constitute the core staff of the section. Since work on the least developed countries cut across the work of the other Divisions of the Commission the section would act as a focal point for co-ordinating the Commission's activities in respect of those countries. The resources that were available were not adequate to carry out effectively the responsibilities that devolved to the Commission in respect of the least developed countries, and recourse would have to be made to extrabudgetary sources. The collaboration of relevant agencies would also be sought.

ANNEX I

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING OF THE  
SUBSTANTIAL NEW PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling the principles and guidelines of the Lagos Plan of Action<sup>1/</sup> concerning the development of African countries and the least developed ones in particular,

Recalling resolution 353(XIV) of 27 March 1979 on the least developed, land-locked, island and most seriously affected countries and resolution 397(XV) of 12 April 1980 on the role of the Economic Commission for Africa in the development process of the African least developed countries,

Taking note of the report of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries<sup>2/</sup> held in Paris from 1 to 14 September 1981 and of the provisions of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries which was adopted by that Conference,

Recalling Resolution CM/886 (XXXVII) adopted by the thirty-seventh Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity and endorsed by the eighteenth Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government which called for the effective monitoring of the implementation of the Substantive New Programme of Action,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 36/194 of 17 December 1981 on the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Noting that the economic performance in the African least developed countries over the past two years demonstrates once again the pervasive effects of their underlying structural weaknesses and their poor abilities to adjust to disturbances,

1. Emphasizes that the successful implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action will depend on the concrete steps taken to implement it at the national, regional and global levels;
2. Recommends that African countries should formulate their development programmes within the framework of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Substantial New Programme of Action;
3. Calls upon the African least developed countries to take immediate steps to establish the machinery for implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Programme at the national level in accordance with paragraphs 110 to 116 of the Programme;
4. Recommends that African least developed countries which have not yet done so should take immediate steps to set up focal points which will be responsible for continuing contacts with development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, concerning the review and implementation of the Programme;

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<sup>1/</sup> A/S-11/14, Annex 1.

<sup>2/</sup> A/CONF.104/22.

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5. Further recommends that, in order to facilitate the follow-up and monitoring of the Programme at the regional level and for purposes of information, each African least developed country should submit to the annual Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries a progress report on the implementation of the Programme at the national level;

6. Requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other relevant United Nations agencies, to provide African least developed countries with the necessary substantive and technical support and advisory services for the implementation and follow-up of the Programme;

7. Recommends that in view of the mandate given to the Economic Commission for Africa as the agency responsible for the co-ordination of over-all development activities in the African region<sup>3/</sup>, the Commission should be closely associated with the lead agencies in the substantive preparations and organization of aid consultative groups (review meetings, round tables) that each least developed country is called upon to convene in accordance with paragraph 110-116 of the Programme;

8. Urges the Executive Secretary, in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to assist African least developed countries upon request by governments in all phases of the review meetings and in the search for financial support;

9. Requests the Executive Secretary to ensure the full mobilization and co-ordination at the regional level of the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system for the regional implementation of the follow-up and monitoring of the Programme and co-operation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in global monitoring;

10. Appeals to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to provide additional resources over and above those earmarked for governments to enable the Executive Secretary to carry out his responsibilities in respect of the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Substantial New Programme of Action in the African region.

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<sup>3/</sup> General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977.